

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

January 26, 2007

The Honorable Donald C. Winter
Secretary of the Navy
The Pentagon
Washington, DC 20350

Dear Secretary Winter,

As the Navy proceeds with its Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) to study the feasibility of stationing additional surface ships and/or a nuclear aircraft carrier at Naval Station Mayport, we are writing to ask you to ensure there is a thorough review of the costs associated with such a decision.

The report language attached to the House version of the FY06 Department of Defense Appropriations Act urging the accomplishment of an EIS does not prevent the Navy from considering the financial implications of a nuclear build-out in Mayport, the resultant duplication in nuclear infrastructure or the relevancy of additional ship movements to Mayport given strategic realities. As currently contemplated, the EIS will focus entirely on Mayport and will not include a cost-benefit analysis comparing Mayport and Norfolk.

Consider that between 2001 and 2007, the Navy requested and the Congress appropriated \$295 million in pier upgrades at Naval Station Norfolk. Norfolk has the nuclear infrastructure in place and does not require the dredging that must be accomplished at Mayport to accommodate a *Nimitz*-class or a CVN-21 aircraft carrier. The EIS should consider the capabilities and construction that will be duplicated due to existing facilities in Norfolk.

In particular, BRAC implementation has strained our military construction budgets and has forced every service to avoid costly infrastructure investments. Building new naval capacity does not appear prudent at a time when the Navy is striving to meet its BRAC requirements, finance a 313-ship Navy and recapitalize naval aviation.

Additionally, we respectfully request your opinion regarding the strategic utility of moving additional ships to Florida. The recent Quadrennial Defense Review makes no reference to the need to expand nuclear infrastructure or to supplement surface assets in Mayport. Some have argued that dispersal of our aircraft carriers mandates the stationing of an aircraft carrier at Mayport. But given the tempo of naval operations, our aircraft carriers are already dispersed and can be moved to a variety of ports on a temporary basis should world events demand it.

Finally, we are aware of, and support the Commonwealth of Virginia's December 27, 2006 scoping comments on the Mayport EIS. Those comments raise a number of concerns that should be carefully considered by the Navy.

We have always supported the Navy's prerogative to base its ships consistent with national security requirements. However, in this case, we fail to understand how a major nuclear build-out

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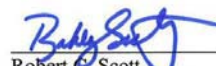
that will require significant dredging and military construction is advisable - as we strive to build a larger fleet - or consistent with national security imperatives.

Secretary Winter, we appreciate and thank you for your attention to this matter and look forward to your response. Please do not hesitate to contact us should you have any questions or concerns.

Sincerely,


Thelma Drake
Member of Congress


Jo Ann Davis
Member of Congress


Robert C. Scott
Member of Congress


J. Randy Forbes
Member of Congress